

Water normal, no criminal inquiry into sewage spill

By Kathryn Reed

The latest bacteria results from Tahoe Keys Marina show normal levels.

"The results show concentrations of fecal coliform bacteria that represents typical surface waters of this nature," Lauri Kemper, deputy director Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, said in a statement.

The May 7 samples are the last Lahontan intends to take. However, this does not mean the investigation is over.

Lahontan is continuing to work with El Dorado County Environmental Health Department and South Tahoe Public Utility District. That should be completed in the next couple weeks.

"I spoke with environmental health officials who explained that there is no indication of criminal conduct, as alluded to on a Facebook posting. The health department official was reportedly present when the plumber cleared the line. For this reason, we will not be conducting any investigation into the fecal matter," South Lake Tahoe Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*.

While fire departments can be part of these types of investigations, it often depends who is called first. In this case Lahontan received the first alert on May 4 that there had been a sewage spill from the Fresh Ketch restaurant in South Lake Tahoe that flowed onto a walkway into Lake Tahoe.

"If we would have been called via 911, we would have responded to the spill at the marina. I am guessing no one thought of us, but we would have sent a hazardous materials response and

worked with the Coast Guard,” SLT Fire Chief Jeff Meston told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Jury begins deliberations in Nutting case

By Brad Branan, Sacramento Bee

Jurors this afternoon began deliberating the fate of El Dorado County Supervisor Ray Nutting in a case that could end his political career after four terms in office.

Attorneys representing Nutting and the El Dorado District Attorney’s Office made closing arguments earlier today in a case involving alleged misrepresentation of grants Nutting received from CalFire. Jurors are set to return Tuesday at 8:30am.

Nutting faces four felonies and seven misdemeanors. The felony charges are related to economic disclosure reports Nutting submitted without describing the Cal Fire grants and his approval of budgets for two small fire districts that had board members who signed the grant checks.

If convicted of any of the felony counts, Nutting would have to resign his supervisor seat under state law.

[Read the whole story](#)

McClintock challenger infuses drama into contest

By Christopher Cadelago, Sacramento Bee

In the last few weeks, Art Moore convened with business owners at Gar Woods Grill and Pier in Carnelian Bay.

He learned about California's bread basket from the Madera County Farm Bureau and cheered on the state's Olympians at a homecoming in Squaw Valley. Moore met with seniors in Roseville, gathered with veterans in Foresthill and joined families for an egg hunt in Granite Bay. There was breakfast at Heidi's Family Restaurant in South Lake Tahoe and lunch at Hog Wild BBQ in Placerville.

For Moore, 36, it's all new territory as he mounts an unexpected challenge to Rep. Tom McClintock, a conservative icon in California.

A Susanville native who recently moved to Roseville from Alexandria, Va., Moore spent years climbing the ranks of the military and then in private business, with little desire for the handshaking, baby-kissing and meat-on-a-stick eating activities that define campaigns. He had never registered to vote, let alone cast a ballot in an election, adhering to a philosophy that career military officers should avoid partisan politics. He registered for the first time – as a Republican – in January.

But for a nonpolitician, Moore's entry into the sprawling 4th District race centered in Placer and El Dorado counties has touched off a wealth of political intrigue.

Read the whole story

Scientists developing farm animals to survive climate change

By Evan Halper, Los Angeles Times

NEWARK, Del. — When a team of researchers from the University of Delaware traveled to Africa two years ago to search for exemplary chickens, they weren't looking for plump thighs or delicious eggs.

They were seeking out birds that could survive a hotter planet.

The researchers were in the vanguard of food scientists, backed by millions of dollars from the federal government, racing to develop new breeds of farm animals that can stand up to the hazards of global warming.

Some climate-change activists dismiss the work, which is just getting underway, as a distraction and a concession to industrial-style agriculture, which they blame for compounding the world's environmental problems. Those leading the experiments, however, say new, heat-resistant breeds of farm animals will be essential to feeding the world as climate change takes hold.

The experiments reflect a continued shift in the federal government's response to climate change. With efforts to reduce carbon emissions lagging behind what most scientists believe will be needed to forestall further warming, the government increasingly is looking for ways to protect key industries from the impact.

Caesars quarterly losses continue to grow

By Michelle Rindels, AP

LAS VEGAS – Caesars Entertainment on Wednesday reported a wider first-quarter loss as gambling revenue fell and the company's casinos outside of Las Vegas faced stiffer competition and bad weather.

The Las Vegas-based company, which runs the Caesars, Harrah's, and Horseshoe brands, as well as Harveys at Lake Tahoe, has struggled since the recession, and has not posted a profit since 2009. It's hobbled by its lack of a presence in the Chinese gambling enclave of Macau, which has been the center of the gambling world for years.

The Las Vegas-based company lost \$386.4 million, or \$2.82 cents per share in the period ending March 31. A year earlier it lost \$217.6 million, or \$1.74 cent per share.

Revenue fell 2 percent to \$2.1 billion.

Rivals Wynn Resorts Ltd., MGM Resorts and Las Vegas Sands all posted big quarterly gains, helped by their lucrative Macau resorts.

Caesars announced late Tuesday that it was restructuring its \$23 billion in long-term debt to eliminate more than \$1 billion in obligations that were coming due in 2015. Its shares jumped more than 14 percent Wednesday.

In Las Vegas, Caesars is in the final stages of transforming Bill's Gamblin' Hall & Saloon into a boutique hotel dubbed The Cromwell. It saw visitor numbers grow this spring after opening its \$550 million LINQ development, an entertainment district featuring the world's tallest Ferris wheel.

That attraction, named the High Roller, is welcoming thousands of visitors each day and has attracted steady special-event and banquet business, according to Caesars Chief Financial Officer Donald Colvin.

"As additional assets come on line later this year and into 2015, we are excited about Caesars' prospects in Las Vegas," Caesars President and CEO Gary Loveman said in a statement. "We are also looking forward to developing an integrated resort in South Korea with our partners there, a promising market given its proximity to China."

Still, the company's casinos in the East and Gulf Coast returned lackluster first-quarter results. In addition to the rough winter, Caesars executives said customers are coming to gamble at regional casinos less frequently, and it's been difficult to increase their visits.

The company's earnings report was released after the close of trading on Wall Street. Its shares slipped 18 cents to \$21 in after-hours trading.

Upgrades being made to Emerald Bay business corridor



What was a restaurant will soon be a building for bikes and standup paddleboards. Photo/LTN

Businesses on Emerald Bay Road are making changes.

The long vacant building that used to house a Chinese restaurant has been demolished. In its place and using the same footprint will be a building that will house South Shore Bikes and SUP Tahoe.

“Originally they planned on remodeling, but found that the building required so much upgrade that it was more cost effective to rebuild,” Hilary Roverud, director of Development Services for South Lake Tahoe, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Those businesses have to leave the old AAA building that is a half block north of the Y in South Lake Tahoe because it is going to be torn down and a Bev Mo will be erected.

Keith Simpson last year sold Murphy’s Irish Pub to go to work for the Food Network as host of the show “Buy This Restaurant”. Sonney’s BBQ Shack has taken over that location.

Burgers A-Go-Go is now Tahoe Burgers & More.

Lazy S Lodge is on the market.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Plastic bags caused sewage backup; fecal numbers high

By Kathryn Reed

Plastic bags are what caused the backup at the Fresh Ketch restaurant and subsequent sewage spill into Lake Tahoe.

A plumber from Summit Plumbing in his work order said he found a 4-inch sewer line backed up and overflowing on May 3. He also removed plastic bags from the line.

On the Tahoe Keys Marina & Yacht Club Facebook page Chad Holdren, who works at the marina, claims two former tenants deliberately sabotaged the restaurant by flushing the bags down the toilet.

However, as of the afternoon of May 7, the marina had not contacted the police department to report a crime.

"There is no police activity at this time," Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Andrew Lubrano, one of the people who the marina accused, told *Lake Tahoe News*, "I would never go out of my way to sabotage someone else. I have no reason to. I don't believe anyone sabotaged them."

He plans to meet with Lahontan officials next week as well as his attorney.

Lubrano is the one who on May 4 called the emergency number for Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board to let them know he saw the sewage on the back walkway of the South Lake Tahoe restaurant and that it was flowing into Lake Tahoe.

Lahontan tested for bacteria on Monday and found fecal coliform bacteria levels well above normal.

Tests taken May 6 show numbers are going down except at the location closest to the discharge. It is 288 colony forming units per 100 milliliters.

Lahontan's standards are 20 cfu per 100 ml and not more than 10 percent of all samples collected in a 30-day period to exceed 40 cfu/100 ml.

"It could be a goose that went by before the sample was collected or it could be something else of that nature or it could be from the spill. It's hard to say," Eric Taxer, water resource control engineer with Lahontan, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We will continue to collect samples through the week to see if it's an anomaly or goes back down."

The results have been forwarded to the El Dorado County Environmental Health Department.

TRPA Regional Plan court decision appealed

By Kathryn Reed

Earthjustice, which represents the Sierra Club and Friends of the West Shore, waited until May 7 – the last day possible – to file an appeal regarding the U.S. District Court's decision upholding the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's Regional Plan update.

"The agency's strange strategy to protect Lake Tahoe and its surrounding landscape from the damage caused by excessive

urbanization over past decades is to promote even more development,” Earthjustice attorney Wendy Park said in a statement. “We will continue our fight to protect the lake from the misguided actions of the agency charged with protecting and restoring its environment.”



The TRPA’s Regional Plan is headed back to court.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

The Regional Plan was approved by the bi-state regulatory agency in December 2012, five years after the previous one was supposed to be null and void. Countless meetings were conducted, comments given and bickering between the two states over the document that almost resulted in Nevada’s pulling out of the bi-state Compact.

Two months after the Governing Board approved the plan the lawsuit was filed. U.S. District Court Judge John Mendez on April 7 said the agency could keep the document in place. Last June he had handed TRPA a partial victory by saying the Regional Plan update does not violate California law by allowing local jurisdictions to have more authority. That was one of the items in the lawsuit.

It will now be up to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals to make a decision.

“TRPA is confident the Regional Plan will accelerate Lake Tahoe’s restoration and support sustainable communities,” TRPA

Executive Director Joanne Marchetta told *Lake Tahoe News*. “While the appeal makes its way through the legal process, we will continue to put the substantial environmental benefits of the plan into place.”

The environmental groups believe the environmental impact statement for the RPU failed to analyze how the document will have negative impacts on soil conservation, water quality and air quality. Their contention is the plan promotes more growth, including in areas not already developed.

“TRPA has abandoned its core mission to restore and protect Lake Tahoe’s environment,” Laurel Ames of the Sierra Club said in a statement. “It’s a fallacy that the environmental damage caused to Lake Tahoe by the over-urbanization approved by TRPA can be solved by further intensifying urbanization, and this demonstrates just how far the agency has strayed.”

Round Hill man found safe

Updated May 7 8:44am:

Donald Morris Jr. has been found safe.

Donald Morris Jr. of Round Hill has been missing since April 20.



Donald Morris
Jr.

His landlord last saw the 55-year-old that day.

Morris' vehicle is at his residence.

Morris is 6-foot-4, 225 pounds, and has brown hair and green eyes.

Anyone with information is asked to call Investigator John Preston at 775.782.9909.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

EDC supe candidates try to sway voters



Candidates for El Dorado County District 5 seat are Angela Swanson, from left, Teresa Piper, Sue Novasel,

Gerri Grego, Kevin Brown and Kenny Curtzwiler. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

MEYERS – Few specifics and little substance came out of the first candidates' forum on the South Shore for El Dorado County District 5 supervisor.

While economic vitality and the need for jobs that pay more than minimum wage were themes echoed throughout the night, the details of how to make that a reality were lacking from the six candidates.

What specific companies might make the difference were not mentioned – not even the genre – other than perhaps Internet based. And like so many discussions on this topic, what wasn't addressed is why aren't the companies with high paying jobs already here.

The Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce and Tahoe Regional Young Professionals sponsored the May 6 event at the California Conservation Corps.

Some of the questions were directed to all of the candidates, while others were to specific individuals. The audience had a chance to submit questions as well. The questions that could not be asked and answered within the two hours will be given to the candidates, with responses posted on TRYP's website.

Gerri Grego was asked for an example of how she would stimulate job growth.

Her response – Fewer government regulations. She is worried about an increase in recreation jobs because they don't pay well. She would like the area to focus on what she calls the "silver tsunami" – or the aging population – as a sector that will need care and therefore jobs specific to cater to that group.

Angela Swanson was asked how she would balance economic vitality with a healthy environment.

Her response – She said the economy and environment are inseparable. She pointed to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's Regional Plan as the answer – that good science will make all the difference.

Teresa Piper was asked how she would give Meyers a voice.

Her response – She said it's not just Meyers that feels disenfranchised, but every community east of Placerville does. She said with the East Slope having water and recreation that support the West Slope, it's time the West Slope gives something back. She would like that something to be jobs; Internet based specifically.

Kevin Brown was asked how he would fit in with others.

His response – He is an advocate of partnerships, finding solutions together. He would like to establish a county newsletter to reach people. And he wants advisors throughout the district to give a voice to more people.

Sue Novasel was asked how she would engage constituents of all ages.

Her response – She would also like to establish an online newsletter so it reached people who get their info via their computer or smart phone and don't necessarily go to meetings. She said it's important to be involved with all sectors of the district.

Kenny Curtzwiler was asked how he would hold agencies, businesses and individuals accountable.

His response – He said it's time for residents to take over and make sure everything agencies have talked about is implemented, and for the agencies to take a back seat.

The public's questions were more specific and concise. One was about what the candidates would do about mental health.

Grego – She said the biggest problem is getting services to the people who need it.

Piper – First responders need more training.

Brown – Hold people's feet to the fire and figure out the real reason for the continual turnover in Child Protective Services.

Novasel – There needs to be better coordination between first responders and service providers.

Curtzwiler – Too much of the time people are reactive instead of proactive.

Swanson – The culture in Placerville needs to change, it's dysfunctional, especially with 11 human resource directors in the last nine years.

They all agreed not much could be done about Red Hawk money being spent on the West Slope and that the Indian casino is an economic knife in the South Shore's back.

They also agree the Meyers Area Plan should be slowed down. Swanson proposed Meyers create a community service district so then they would have more of a say as well as more elected oversight. Curtzwiler said the decision should be made when there is a new supervisor later this year.

Another question was about how best to represent the county as a whole when on other boards like TRPA and the California Tahoe Conservancy.

Brown said he would likely appoint a representative to TRPA like Placer County does. He also pointed out how the three Nevada representatives live outside the Lake Tahoe Basin.

The others said being on those other boards is critical because they are Tahoe centric.

They were asked how they would decide if a project that comes before TRPA is good for Tahoe.

Swanson – Projects will have to meet community plan area guidelines, and most will be rebuilds, not new development.

Curtzwiler – Cities and the county should be making those decisions, not TRPA.

Grego – High-rises are not needed, but instead be sensible and considerate projects. She pointed out that it's not up to board members what projects come before them.

Brown – There are regulations in place that have to be met. It's a team approach, not one person's decision on a project.

Novasel – Local representation is important on boards.

Piper – Look to see if it fits an area and don't base decisions on personal choice.

The election is June 3. To win outright, a candidate must receive 50 percent plus one vote. Otherwise the top two vote getters will head to a November runoff.

Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe is hosting a supervisor forum on May 14 from 11:30am-1:30pm. For reservations, email soroptimistslt@gmail.com by May 12. Cost of the lunch at Harrah's Lake Tahoe is \$10.